DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 259 EC 123 282

AUTHOR	Caster, Jerry
TITLE	Establishing the School-Parent Relationship.
INSTITUTION	Drake Univ., Des Moines, Iowa. Midwest Regional Resource Center.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	79
CONTRACT	300-78-0023
NOTE	123p.; For related information, see EC 123 283-284. Colored pages may not reproduce clearly.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; *Exceptional Persons; *Federal Legislation; *Individualized Instruction; *Parent Participation; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; Program Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Education for All Handicapped Children Act; *Individualized Education Programs

ABSTRACT

Intended for educators who deal with parents of handicapped students, the handbook provides practical suggestions for working with parents not only at times where federal law requires it but through the process of development, implementation, and review of an individualized educational plan (IEP) as well. Eight sections cover the following topics (sample subtopics in parentheses): introduction to the parent's viewpoint: historical and legal perspectives of a partnership with parents: parents and the team approach: parents and the IEP meeting (focusing on major goals, encouraging active parent participation, selecting the appropriate educational intervention): involving parents in the instructional process (home contingencies for school performance, practice of skills at home, examples of programs for use by parents): parents and the annual review (involving the student and conducting and concluding the meeting): resolving conflict with parents: and resources (selected P.L. 94-142--the Education for All Handicapped Children Act--rules and regulations related to parents' rights and responsibilities and bibliography on parent information). (SBH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Raymond
J. S. Fulmer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

PREFACE

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL PARENT RELATIONSHIP is a handbook for educators who work with parents of handicapped students. This handbook provides educators with practical suggestions for working with parents of handicapped students not only at times where federal law requires it but all through the process of development, implementation, and reviewing an individualized education plan (IEP). There is no one parent or educator who can do it alone. The handicapped student needs assistance from parents, principals, special and general education teachers and possibly other specialized personnel. The key to meeting the exceptional needs of the handicapped student is cooperation. It is with the idea of establishing school-parent cooperation that this was written.

Raymond L. Feltner
Project Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE - - AN INTRODUCTION	1
A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES - - - - - - - - -	1
PARENTS AND THE TEAM APPROACH - - - - - - - -	1
PARENTS AND THE IEP MEETING - - - - - - - - -	1
Inviting Parents to Participate - - - -	2
Involving The Student - - - - - - - - -	3
Preparing For The Meeting - - - - - - -	5
Explaining The Meeting To The Parents -	5
The Meeting - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	6
Helping Parents To Understand Goals - -	9
Focusing On Major Goals - - - - - - - -	10
Encouraging Active Parent Participation	11
Selecting The Appropriate Educational Intervention - - - - - - - - - - - -	11
The Teacher As The Focal Point For Parents	12
Planning For The Next Step - - - - - - -	14
Additional Considerations For Effective Meetings - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	15
INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS	1

Page

Involving Parents Through Helping Them To Understand The Classroom Program - - - 2

Involving Parents Through The Use Of Home Contingencies For School Performance 5

Involving Parents Through The Practice Of Skills At Home - - - - - - - - - - 9

Examples Of Programs For Use By Parents - 11

Deciding Where To Start In Involving Parents - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 17

Don't Over-Involve Parents - - - - - - - - 18

PARENTS AND THE ANNUAL REVIEW - - - - - - - - 1

Preparing For The Annual Review Meeting - 2

Inviting Parents To The Annual Review Meeting - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4

Involving The Student - - - - - - - - - - 5

Conducting The Annual Review Meeting - - - 5

Concluding The Annual Review Meeting - - - 7

Should The Parents Attend? - - - - - - - - 7

RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH PARENTS - - - - - - - - 1

RESOURCES - 1

Selected P.L. 94-142 Rules and Regulations Related To Parents Rights And Responsibilities

Bibliography On Parent Information

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By
Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE: AN INTRODUCTION

Section I

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE -- AN INTRODUCTION

New special education laws give parents the right to participate in the educational process. Meeting the spirit of the law can be a challenging and exciting experience. The purpose of this material is to help create a school-parent partnership. In approaching this task, an attempt has been made to write to the educator but from the parent's viewpoint. The material describes the parent-school relationship from referral through placement, including the development of the IEP and the annual review. In using this type of organization, one fact quickly became apparent. Many students are already enrolled in special education services. For parents of these handicapped students there is a history of experiences, some positive and some negative, that will influence their willingness to become involved with school personnel. Because of these experiences, parents of handicapped students ultimately decide to enter a partnership with the school or to limit their contact with the school as much as possible. While most parents are probably not at the extremes of total participation or non-participation, they could be described as being more on one side than another. Many factors influence the attitudinal tendency of parents when they are contacted about their child. Some of these are:

* nature and severity of the child's problem;

* previous suspicions or lack of them by the parents that the child was "different";

* previous experiences with the school;

* comfort level in dealing with authority figures, i.e., school personnel; and

* other crises the family is facing, e.g. financial problems, health problems, marital problems, or problems with other children.

While these factors may not be under the control of the school, we should be sensitive to them so as to more effectively communicate with parents and prevent misunderstandings.

As educators, we strive to be objective when we work with children. Objectivity is not a characteristic of parents, nor is it expected to be. The child is a part and an extension of parent Consequently, as conferences are conducted, notes sent home, or telephone calls made, it is helpful to remember:

> *Parents identify with their children, want them to do well in school, and are emotionally involved when their children have school problems.*

As in most partnerships, professional or social, effective communication is a prerequisite if the partnership is to work. The same is true for a parent/educator partnership. Communication is usually described as having a sender, a receiver and a message, with the message received being what the sender intended it to be. Because of the factors mentioned that influence parent attitudes and identification with *their* child, the message received by the parent is not always what was intended. The following are only a few of the possible interpretations parents can give to messages from school.

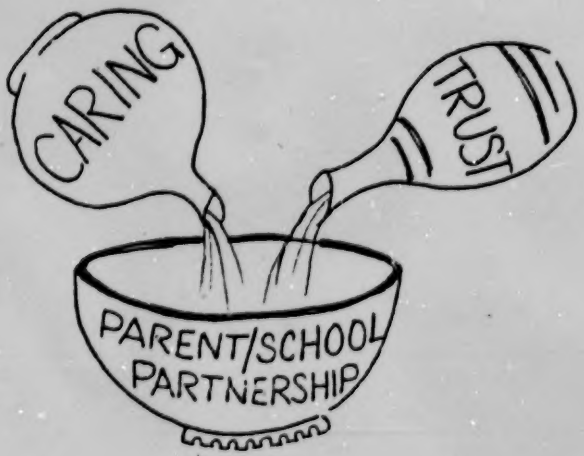
Message from School	Possible Parent Interpretation
I	I
Your child is having a problem in school. We are trying some ways to solve it.	a. I'm pleased that they let me know; they really care about my child. b. I suspected that he was having problems. c. I'll have to help him more at home. d. He didn't have a problem last year!
II	II
* We would like your permission to do an educational evaluation to help us better serve your child.	a. Hopefully we'll get some information that will help. b. Are they trying to say that something is wrong with my child? c. There must really be a problem if they want him to see a psychologist! d. If the teacher would do her job, this wouldn't be necessary.
III	III
* We would like to invite you to a staffing to review the results of the testing and to discuss how we can help your child.	a. That's a good idea! I want to be involved. b. If he would just shape up, this wouldn't be necessary!

c. What will I be able to say?
d. I'll have to get off work, but I'll go.

* If the parents have not been contacted earlier about the presence of a problem, such requests could be very upsetting.

What is the view from the parent's perspective? Unfortunately, there is no single viewpoint. Parents are as unique as their children. Throughout this material, ideas and suggestions are offered for establishing partnerships with parents. They are not a panacea; they must be applied with real sensitivity for the situation of each parent. What is appropriate and meaningful involvement for one parent may not be appropriate and meaningful for another. The successful school-parent relationship exists at many levels and in many degrees. As with any relationship, it grows with nurturing and care.

In closing this introduction, it is important to emphasize that special education is in a period of transition. Many of the frustrations now encountered within the process of working with parents will disappear as educators and parents become more experienced with the new special education process. However, establishing and maintaining a true school-parent partnership will always be an ongoing task if it is to be built upon a foundation of mutual caring and trust.



ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By
Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Section 2

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Special educators have not worked with parents the past and now they should! Wrong! Special ucation has a history of involving parents in e education of children with special needs. ofessional ethics, as well as the knowledge of e importance of the support of the family unit the student, has provided the impetus for rent involvement in the past. A change has curred. Once parent involvement was a desir- le, but an optional activity, whereas now it s become mandatory. Individual judgement about en and for what purposes to involve parents has en replaced by formal regulations governing all hool districts. The need for professional judge nt has not been replaced. A framework has been ovided to insure that all parents have an equal portunity to be involved in the educational ocess.

Most of the problems that generated the need r mandatory parent involvement have rested with e school as an institution and its policies and ocedures, not with individual special educators. pes of abuses of the right of children and parents ted in court cases include:

* denial of the right of handicapped children to attend school;
* failure to consider language and cultural background in the diagnostic process;
* evaluation and placement of children without parental knowledge or consent; and
* failure to provide appropriate service.

is useful to view the change to mandatory volvement of parents as a part of the social and gal evolution of education. The rights of

handicapped children have become recognized, just as the rights of minority and bilingual children have become recognized. Once providing special education services was a discretionary right of the local school district. Receiving an appropriate education is now a right guaranteed to the handicapped child. Since parents are appropriate advocates for their handicapped children, parental involvement in the educational process is designed to better insure that the rights of handicapped children are protected.

State and Federal laws establish the rights of parents to be involved in the educational decision-making process for their children. The law places new responsibilities on school districts and parents. More than ever before, parents must be involved. This takes time and energy and may slow down decision making. Even though some of the requirements may, at times, create inconveniences for the educator, there are many ways in which the law benefits special education personnel. Already, expansion of services for emotionally handicapped

nd severely/multiply handicapped children has ccurred. Also, support services, such as consult- nts, psychologists, and speech climicians, which re available to help teachers, have expanded apidly. More directly, special educators are eginning to see the following:

* earlier identification and placement of handicapped children;

* greater involvement of parents; and

* parents who are more knowledgeable and vocal about their rights, thus removing full responsibility for child advocacy from special educators.

hile all special educators benefit from the new aws, the special education teacher may benefit ost. There should be no reason for a parent to ell a teacher in the future that "I didn't know y child was in a class for _____ children." ikewise, teachers should not be faced with parents ho complain that their child, "is doing the same ork as he did last year." From now on, parents hould be knowledgeable about their child's ducational problems, the diagnosis, and the goals nd objectives of the special education program. he teacher no longer needs to be caught in the iddle because parents are uninformed. Where uestions cannot be answered or issues resolved, he teacher and the parent together can request a taffing to review the educational diagnosis or needs f the child. In the future it should be easier o involve parents at the secondary level because f a history of working with the school.

Public Law 94-142 states that it is the local ducation agency's (LEA) responsibility to provide arents with the opportunity to be involved. Who s the local education agency? The LEA can be iewed as including members of the school board, uperintendent, principals, teachers, and all other

employees. These are the people who are responsib for providing parents with the opportunity to be involved. Knowingly not providing parents with this opportunity is a denial of their legal rights This is a serious offense and connot be taken lightly. Legally and professionally, no administrator or educator can use as a defense lack of knowledge of the law. As professionals, special educators are expected to be the most knowlegeable individuals in the school district about these issues. The intent is not to frighten special educators, but rather to insure that we recognize the change. We have moved from an era where parer involvement was a desirable, but optional activity to an era where it is now mandatory.

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By
Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

PARENTS AND THE TEAM APPROACH

Section 3

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

PARENTS AND THE TEAM APPROACH

The word "team" is frequently used in conversations with parents of handicapped students. Parents hear that their child will benefit from the team approach. Decisions will be made by the staffing team, and the student will be served by the educational team. Now, parents have the opportunity to become an integral member of their child's team. You have a responsibility to encourage their participation. Parents know their child better than anyone, and the information they possess is valuable in planning an educational program.

Unfortunately, using the word does not create a team.

The general characteristics of a team include:

* a common purpose;

* an agreed-upon role for team members;

* an understanding of the activities performed by other team members; and

* an established procedure for accomplishing the group purpose.

In special education the common purpose is an appropriate educational program for the student, and a meeting or staffing is usually the means for reviewing the problem and reaching decisions. It is in the areas of agreed-upon roles and mutual understanding of responsibilities that we may fall short of being a team. Does everyone understand the role of the parent, the nurse, social worker, psychologist, occupational therapist, and others who may be part of a team? More specifically, do team members understand what the others do when looking at a student? If so, each team member should be able to accurately predict the kind of information that others will bring to a staffing.

Educators can help parents understand their role on the team and make them feel they are an important part of the team. One way to do this is to provide parents with questions that will help them think about their child and prepare information to share at a staffing or meeting. The school could also provide parents with a checklist or form outlining information parents may wish to obtain from the school. Included at the end of this section are sample forms.

True educational teams do exist. Yet, often what is believed to be a team is really individuals reporting information with one or two people actually making the decision. No single individual

can be blamed for the absence of a true team situation. The absence should be viewed as an honest recognition of where we are today. It was not until recently that state and federal laws required comprehensive evaluations and educational meetings, which provide parents the opportunity to participate. Even though teams had been supported in theory, in practice the professional resources and strong requirements for them were missing. This makes the "team" something new, requiring learning for everyone.

The questions listed below can be used to help determine if a true team approach exists. If you can answer "yes," then a team approach probably does exist.

1. Has there been discussion and agreement on the purpose of the team?

2. Has there been discussion and agreement on the roles of team members, including parents?

3. Do team members understand the information collected and reported by each other?

4. Do team members understand the diagnostic requirements of the handicapping conditions?

5. Is there an orientation on the above to new members of the team as personnel changes occur?

A few words of caution are in order. First, it may be felt that if professionals are appropriately trained, they automatically know the roles, methods and jargon of other professionals. That's a dangerous assumption. Changes occur so rapidly that previous information is frequently outdated.

Also, the philosphy of every training institution and, consequently, the role orientation of each professional in a discipline is not the same. In addition, most parents will not be familiar with the professional roles, methods, and language that is used at meetings or staffings. Therefore, team members should make sure that the parents, and where appropriate other professionals, understand what is being discussed.

Secondly, there can be no assumption that everyone will become an expert in all areas. It's too difficult to keep up in a single field. What is sought is sufficient knowledge of the roles and procedures of one another so that information can be pulled together to support or reject interpretations of student functioning. For example, if, based on psychological testing, it is inferred that the student is intellectually limited, does the nurse or social worker question that interpretation if the student became ill soon after the testing, or if the student had attended numerous schools during his or her school career? Presenting information supportive or contradictory to the findings of others requires a good understanding of what others do and the tools they use.

Luckily for everyone, a vigorous comparison of results does not need to occur in every meeting But, does it ever occur? Does the school nurse only report on immunizations and general health, or does the psychologist deal only with test scores? If one person determines that a student is or is not handicapped and what the student does and doesn't need, there is the danger of centralization of power and absence of a true team approach. If that were appropriate, there would be no need to require comprehensive evaluations.

Who has the responsibility to see that a true team situation exists? One could say it is the principal's responsibility since he or she is the

official leader. That approach may or may not work. Realistically, it is in everyone's best interest to see that a team develops, and it must be everyone's reponsibility. A place to begin might be to request time to discuss, as a team, the purpose of the team and the methods or procedures that might be used.

The presence or absence of the team approach is important in working with parents. First, it is usually stated or implied that the student is getting the benefit of a team. If a team situation does not exist, then it is not fair to make parents think they are getting the benefit of a team. Also, if a true team approach does not exist, there is a greater risk of:

* confusing and alientating parents at meetings;

* not having all of the information necessary to make a decision;

* making an inappropriate decision that later will have to be changed or that the parent will challenge; and

* placing the teacher in a position where he/she and the student will fail.

More importantly, decisions of the team determine the educational future of students. This is a professional responsibility that warrants knowledge that decisions are based on quality information, which has been analyzed by a group of individuals functioning as a team.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD

In order that we may know more about your child, would you please fill out this information sheet and bring it with you to the next meeting you attend? No one knows your child as well as you do, and the observations you make about him/her can give us knowledge so that together we might plan a more valuable educational process for your boy or girl. Instead of giving yes/no answers or a mere listing in response to each question, would you please share a specific experience that illustrates your response?

How does your child feel about school?

What does s/he like best?_____

What does s/he dislike?_____

How does your child spend his/her spare time?

What activities are shared with friends?_____

What hobbies does your child enjoy?_____

What responsibilities is s/he given at home?_____

What particular problems does your child have?

What health problems seem to interfere with activities?_____

Are there any problems coping with emotions?_____

FROM: *Parents and Educators: Partners In Individualized Education Program Planning for Handicapped Students. Joyce Shaffer and Jane Bell. Midwest Regional Resource Center, Des Moines, Iowa, 1978.*

at interests and talents does your child have?
What does s/he like to read or have read aloud?_____

What television shows does s/he most enjoy?__

Does s/he play a musical instrument, sing, draw, participate in plays, etc.?_____

at attitudes does your child display?
How does s/he respond to brothers and/or sisters?_____

How does s/he react to parental suggestions?_____

Does s/he willingly accept responsibilities?

_____

at recent changes, if any, have you noted?
Do you see changes in the way s/he works?____

Do you see any changes in the way s/he plays?_____

Do you see changes in his/her relationships with other people?_____

at special help do you think your child needs?
What services would you like your child to receive at school?_____

What special help would you like to receive to aid your child at home?_____

are aware that honest answers to the above ques-
ons often take the form of an "it depends" re-
onse. Please use the space below to make any
erall comment that you think might help us to put
ur above comments in a clearer perspective, or
y additional comments you wish to make concerning
ys you think we can work together to give your
ild the best possible education._____

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO INFORMATION-GATHERING

Just as we count on you to provide important information for us, it is your right to expect that we, who work with your child in an educational setting, provide you with information that you need to have. The following set of questions is designed to serve as a beginning point for your information gathering process. It is in no way intended to limit you or to channel your thinking, but it does let you know the kinds of information we should have available to share with you.

Responses to these questions should provide information related to the educational development of your child in these five areas:

1. Level of achievement.

2. Rate of academic development.

3. Relative strengths and weaknesses in processing information seen, heard, and read.

4. Relative strengths and weaknesses in oral, written, and motor expression.

5. Expected rate of educational growth.

FROM: *Messineo, Louis and Phillip J. Sleeman, A Parents Guide to Special Education, International Journal of Instructional Media, Vol. 4(4), 1976-77, pp. 364-368. (Published by Baywood Publishing Co., Inc., 120 Marine Street, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735)*

Where is my child functioning academically today?

A. How does my child compare to other children his age?

1. Skill development:

   a. Language
   b. Reading
   c. Arithmetic
   d. Writing
   e. Spelling

2. Content development:

   a. General comprehension
   b. Social Studies
   c. Science

Below Average	Average	Above Average

3. Maturity development:

   a. Ability to work independently
   b. Ability to work in a group
   c. Ability to work with peers and adults
   d. Ability to accept responsibility at his/her level

Below Average	Average	Above Average

B. How does my child's school achievement compare with his ability level?

   1. Skill development:

      a. Language
      b. Reading
      c. Arithmetic
      d. Writing
      e. Spelling

   2. Content development:

      a. General comprehension
      b. Social Studies
      c. Science

3. Maturity development:

   a. Ability to work independently
   b. Ability to work in a group
   c. Ability to work with peers and adults
   d. Ability to accept responsibility at his/her level

. How do we know?

A. At what level in the school curriculum is my child presently functioning?

1. Standardized Test Information

   a. Language
   b. Reading
   c. Arithmetic
   d. Writing
   e. Spelling
   f. General comprehension
   g. Social Studies
   h. Science

Achievement Level	Actual Grade Placement

B. At what level in maturity development is my child presently functioning?

1. Maturity development:

	Below Average	Average	Above Average
a. Ability to work independently			
b. Ability to work in a group			
c. Ability to interact with peers and adults			
d. Ability to accept responsibility at his/her level			

C. At what level in the school curriculum is my child presently functioning?

1. Teacher judgment:

	Achievement Level	Actual Grade Placement
a. Language		
b. Reading		
c. Arithmetic		
d. Writing		
e. Spelling		
f. General Comprehension		
g. Social Studies		
h. Science		

3. What is Presently Being Done?

A. What person(s) is responsible for the instructional program in the following subject areas:

1. Curriculum:	Special Education Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Others
a. Language			
b. Reading			
c. Arithmetic			
d. Writing			
e. Spelling			
f. General Comprehension			
g. Social Studies			
h. Science			

B. What person(s) is responsible for the maturity development program?

1. Maturity development:	Special Education Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Others
a. Ability to work independently			
b. Ability to work in a group			
c. Ability to interact with peers and adults			
d. Ability to accept responsibility at his/her level			

C. What person(s) is responsible for writing and communicating to the parents the specific learning objectives (short term) in each subject area?

1. Curriculum:

   a. Language
   b. Reading
   c. Arithmetic
   d. Writing
   e. Spelling
   f. General comprehension
   g. Social Studies
   h. Science

D. What person(s) is responsible for developing and communicating to parents the learning objectives (long term) in each subject area?

1. Curriculum:

   a. Language
   b. Reading
   c. Arithmetic
   d. Writing
   e. Spelling
   f. General comprehension
   g. Social Studies
   h. Science

4. What is my child's anticipated growth rate and ability level?

A. What will be my child's expected growth rate?

1. Skill development:

   a. Language
   b. Reading
   c. Arithmetic
   d. Writing
   e. Spelling

2. Content development:

   a. General comprehension
   b. Social Studies
   c. Science

3. Maturity development:

   a. Ability to work independently
   b. Ability to work in a group
   c. Ability to interact with peers and adults
   d. Ability to accept responsibility at his/her level

Functioning Level	Expected Level	Estimated Growth in One Year

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS...
Before the IEP Meeting

____ Visit your child's classroom to observe your child in an instructional setting.

____ Start a notebook listing your child's developmental and educational history.

____ Talk to your child about his/her feelings toward school, subjects, classmates, and teachers.

____ Keep records of your child's behavior at home such as responsibilities, favorite pastimes, dislikes, typical daily schedule, interaction with others.

____ Make out a list of questions that you want to ask school personnel regarding your child's needs.

____ Make a list of some thoughts to share at the IEP meeting regarding your child's needs and expectations.

____ Make a list of suggestions that you might like to see written into your child's educational plan.

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By
Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

PARENTS AND THE IEP MEETING

Section 4

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

PARENTS AND THE IEP MEETING

The individualized education program (IEP) formalizes the process of designing instructional experiences for a handicapped child, based on that child's specific needs as identified through a comprehensive evaluation. The IEP is a management document, a written statement of decisions about the objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation of special education services for an exceptional child, developed by the educational team at a staffing or meeting. (1.)

IEPs are written annually by an educational team, including the child's teacher, someone other than the teacher who is qualified to provide or supervise special education, and the parents. Parents may choose not to participate. A record of efforts to involve the parents must be kept, if they do not participate.

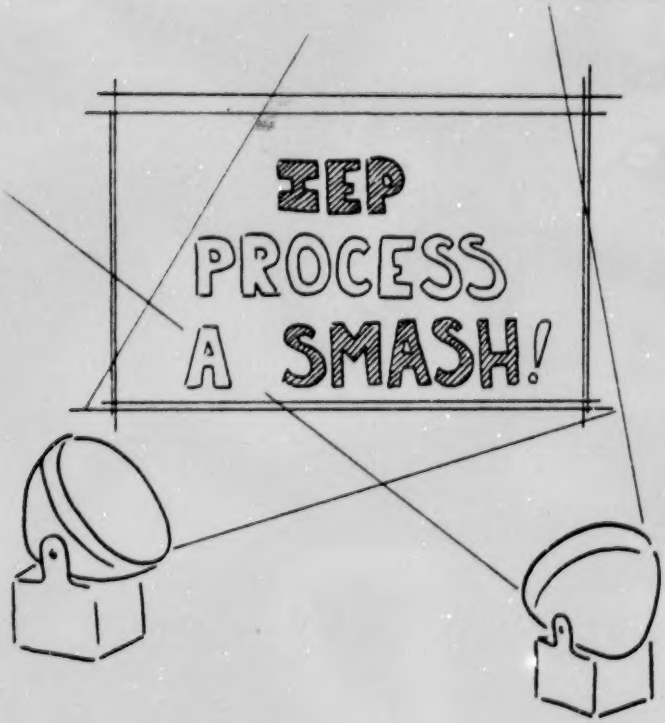
The intent of this requirement is to assure that parents have the opportunity to provide input and to be knowledgeable about their child's school program. Since our focus is on the school-parent partnership, emphasis is now placed on the IEP from the parent's perspective and on involving them in the development of the IEP.

---

1. *FROM: Kansas State Plan For Special Education, 1980.*

Inviting Parents to Participate

The message that parents receive will affect their decision to participate. Your invitation can either communicate, "This is important and your help is needed" or "This is something we have to do and you can participate, if you feel you wan to." When the latter is the message, it is difficult to view the meeting as meaningful. It is dif ficult for team members to be analytical and open to new program directions when the perceived purpose is just to complete a form. There are many ways to communicate the importance of the purpose of the IEP meeting. One way to do this is to provide flexibility in meeting times for the parent's convenience.



Another way to provide flexibility is to provide meeting alternatives. The options include home visits, conferences at school, telephone calls, and letters. Which option is appropriate would seem to be dependent on the understanding of the parent and their level of trust in the individual doing the communicating. A rule of thumb ought to be the less the previous contact with the parent, or the more unsatisfactory previous contacts have been, the more personal the communication should be.

The use of special education forms and the discussion of parent rights requires some caution. The forms can be very confusing. Also, there can be a tendency for parents to feel that the school might be doing something *wrong* or there would not be so many safeguards provided for parents. For the parent who is new to special education, it may be like the warning on a pack of cigarettes. Permission must be obtained and parents' rights must be explained, but unless time is provided for parental understanding of the reasons for the rights, parents can become very anxious by the time of the meeting or staffing. The person who explains to the parents their rights, and what will occur at the staffing, should suggest the parents call him/her if they have questions. This invitation can help to reduce anxiety by promoting the feeling that "it must be 'okay' if I can call, if I want."

Involving the Student

P.L. 94-142 indicates that the student should be included in IEP meetings whenever appropriate. Some benefits of including students are listed below:

* student commitment is more easily obtained.

* student learns best when there is an understanding of what is to be learned.

* student sees modeling of home-school partnership.

* student anxiety about what was said about him/her in the meeting is reduced.

The advantage for the teacher in having the student help to develop goals is obvious. If the student does not attend the meetings, the teacher may want to review the outcome of the meeting with the student.

Preparing for the Meeting

Some people have interpreted the requirement for parent participation in the development of the IEP to mean that there should be no preparation before the meeting. That's a silly notion. When we take a car to a mechanic, see a physician, or call in a repairman, we expect them to analyze the situation and present their recommendations to us. We would be shocked if the mechanic were to ask, "How would you like your car to perform this year? Where do you think we should start?" In order to prevent a similar situation from occurring at IEP meetings, we need to be prepared to present recommendations to parents. Instructional assessments, samples of the student's work or types of instructional materials that may be used can help parents understand the recommendations made at the meetings. Preparation for the meeting will help to give the parents confidence in the school.

Explaining the Meeting to Parents

The law specifies that parents must be invited to the meeting and that they must have an explanation of the roles of the staffing participants. It also specifies that they may have anyone they choose accompany them to the meeting. The real problem is, how can an educational meeting be explained to someone not familiar with education, and how can parents be prepared to meaningfully participate in their first meeting?

Some ideas that may help parents be active participants are:

* have a parent(s) who is familiar with an educational meeting explain to the new parent what will happen.

* send the parents a letter outlining who is going to be at the meeting and explaining the purpose of the meeting. The sample forms provided in the last section may be helpful to the parent.

* send an agenda or brief outline of what will be discussed at the meeting.

* the principal may want to invite the parents to come to the school for a meeting that would only involve the principal and the parents. Any possible apprehensions could be discussed and/or the parents could meet the instructional personnel. A phone call from the school to the parents could also accomplish this.

The Meeting

The chairperson has major responsibilities and a lot of control over the atmosphere created for parents at the meeting. A degree of anxiety will always be present for parents because of con cern about their child and the unfamiliar nature of the school environment. This is especially true at parents first meeting. Some of the thing which have a bearing on parent comfort are:

- initial greeting

  Are the parents met by someone, or are they directed to where the meet-ting will be held? Does someone accompany them and introduce them to others?

- seating arrangement

Are they seated next to someone they know?

- re-introduction of persons at the meeting

When the meeting begins is there a re-introduction of the people at the meeting and explanation of roles? Are the names and roles casually mentioned during the meeting to help parents identify speakers?

It is the area of meaningful involvement of parents in which most growth is probably needed. The chairperson can facilitate this by helping the parents understand the meeting process. One way to help parents understand the meeting process is to explain the steps that will be used in the staffing to make decisions on how to help the student.

Typically, the chairperson would describe the following sequence of events to the parents, giving them some idea of what is to happen:

1. description of the current problem;
2. review of observations, assessments, and information of team members;
3. comparison of information related to the student's strengths and weaknesses to make sure agreement exists on possible explanations for the problem;
4. determination of eligibility for special services;
5. review of intervention alternatives;
6. selection of alternatives that are appropriate.

It is advisable for the chairperson to inform the meeting team that all information discussed is confidential and is not to be shared with others. Many should already be aware of this, but it is reassuring for the parent to hear. Also, the parent should be requested to provide information or to ask questions whenever they wish throughout the meeting. The chairperson can review periodically for the group what has been accomplished, and what still needs to be done. This provides everyone, including the parent, with an orientation to what has been done, and what is being discussed.

As the meeting progresses, the chairperson should try to:

* control the professional jargon

* ask for input from the parent, e.g.,

  - Have you observed that at home?
  - Has he/she (the student) commented about it?
  - Do you agree?
  - Do you understand what someone meant by...?
  - Do you have any other questions?

* obtain reactions from all professionals and parents to the information shared

  - Is there other supportive information?
  - Is there contradictory information?
  - Are there other possible interpretations?
  - Is there other information we should consider that we don't have?

The verbalization of these questions is important for two reasons. The first reason is to avoid making errors. The second reason, from the parent's

perspective, is that parents may not agree with what is being said about their child. Yet, they generally would not have specific information or would not feel comfortable in refuting what was said. Questions of the kind mentioned give assurance to the parents that important information is not being overlooked and that the group is an advocate for their child.

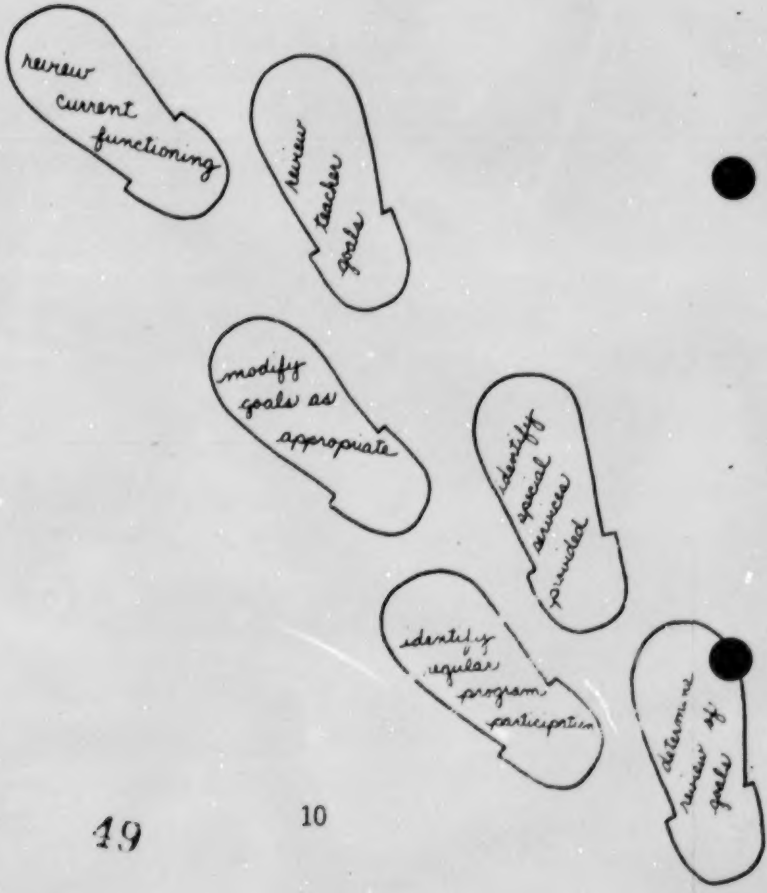
Helping Parents to Understand Goals

Many educational teams focus on the specific skills which lead to a goal because of orientation to an instructional sequence. In contrast, parents focus on the end result. Presenting the larger end product, the goal, before discussing the skills which lead to the goal helps the parent understand the desired end result. Then, if appropriate, the many steps leading up to that goal can be described.

Watch out for jargon! Many terms have a great deal of meaning for educators, but mean nothing to parents. Terms like auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, letter recognition, sound-symbol relationships and so forth are usually not part of the working vocabulary of parents. They can more easily understand the type of book that the child is expected to be able to read at the end of the year. Having the book to show the parents makes it even more understandable. Jargon can confuse parents or make them feel inadequate. Technical terms should be replaced with something which has meaning for the parent or should be explained so the parents can understand.

Focusing on Major Goals

It is possible to develop so many goals that the parent is swamped by the amount of information. When this happens, the parent can lose sight of the major purposes of the special education service. Three to six major goals a year will usually be sufficient. This is especially true if provisions are made for periodic progress reporting on the short-term objectives which lead to those goals. Additional goals can be added during the year, if necessary.



Encouraging Active Parent Participation

Involving parents isn't easy, especially if it's their first IEP meeting. Some thought should be given as to how this will be done. Certainly, they can be asked if they agree with the major needs described by the team. Sometimes, team members will want to ask if there are problems or concerns with how the student functions at home. Often, if the student could learn to play a leisure time game with siblings, tell time, or master a self-help skill, life at home would be smoother for the parents and child. Including goals aimed at developing these skills in the IEP will demonstrate that the school-parent partnership goes beyond parents helping the school. It may also be beneficial to include a goal that the parent can help to accomplish. Improved attendance, self-help skills, and math facts are a few possibilities. Caution should be taken to prevent giving parents more responsibility for the school-parent partnership than they can handle. Establishing one goal on which there will be cooperation is a big step toward a real partnership. Establishing a partnership at the beginning, when the IEP is written, will make it easier to work with the parents if student behaviors develop which require close cooperation between home and school.

Selecting the Appropriate Educational Intervention

This is the last step in the meeting process. At its conclusion a decision should be reached about what action to take to try to solve the educational problem. Whether or not the child is eligible for a special education service or program will affect the number and kind of options available. If the child is educationally handicapped, the special education alternatives will need to be presented, discussed, and a decision will need to be made.

The involvement and commitment of the parents to the final decision are vital to its being successful. The specifics of the situation and the needs of the child will shape the ultimate decision. To promote and maintain effective working relations with the parents, it is important that:

* the wishes of the parents be followed, at least on a trial basis, if those are of a less restrictive nature. Even if they are probably wrong, if parents feel something wasn't done that should have been tried, they may never by supportive of another alternative. Timelines and criteria should be established in those situations to evaluate the success of the plan.

* the least restrictive environment can be determined.

* it be emphasized that decisions are subject to periodic review and modification.

The Teacher as the Focal Point for Parents

The parent focuses on the teacher. The role of the principal, consultant, psychologist, speech clinician and others are less vital to the parent because the parent views the teacher as in charge of learning and of taking care of the child. With some exceptions, the satisfaction of the parents at the end of the year will be based almost entirely on their evaluation of the teacher. Because of this, it is important that the teacher assume an active role in the IEP meeting. Developing the logical channel of communication that exists

between the parent and teacher at the IEP meeting can help to prevent many problems and identify others early. It should be one of the desired outcomes of the IEP meeting.

52

Planning for the Next Step

If the IEP meeting has been a success, the beginning of a parent-school partnership will exist. The parents will want to know what the next step is in this relationship. At the very minimum, it will involve reviewing the goals at the end of the year. As an alternative, the next step may be one of the following:

* parent-school meetings
* home visits
* periodic written reports on progress toward goals
* classroom visitation by the parents
* an invitation for the parents to send notes or to call when they wish
* parent involvement in the instructional process

How and when the new service or program will be initiated is important to the parents. There should be no gaps of information when the parent leaves or they will begin to worry. This is especially true when the decision that has been made involves changing schools or in some cases attending a class in another school district.

Many parents will think of questions after the meeting. The diagnosis or the specifics about the new program may require additional explanation. Someone should be designated as a person they can contact. Generally, if all the details have not been finalized, the contact person should be the person working them out with the parents. Make sure the parents have the name and telephone number of a person they can call when they leave the meeting.

Additional Considerations for Effective Meetings

* Avoid making a decision without having all of the necessary information. Sometimes it will be found that all necessary assessments have not been conducted or that the discussion identifies important questions for which there is no information. Don't force a decision. Instead, adjourn the meeting and reconvene it when the needed information is available. The time that may be saved by getting a decision made will not offset the time or the embarrassment required to correct a mistake.

* Avoid overpowering parents with too many people. Being surrounded by a large group of strangers is not comfortable, and it is difficult to ask questions. Parents can best be served at times by having one person share information collected by two or three other professionals. For example, have one person report the speech, health, social and psychological information. This may be especially true if it is felt the diagnostic label will create a crisis for the parent or if some members of the team have little to report. Before the parents come to the meeting, you may want to ask them if they want all of the professionals working with their child present or if the number present should be kept to a minimum.

* Avoid conducting a meeting when there are major differences of opinion among professionals. No sure method exists to prevent this, but everyone has some responsibility for checking with others to see if perceptions are similar. Nothing can be as confusing or upsetting to parents as to hear professionals debate issues that they do not understand. A pre-meeting conference without parents sometimes is needed to isolate the reasons for major differences in viewpoints. Often, the need to collect additional information will be identified at such a conference. Program decisions are not made at such a meeting.

* Avoid overselling the benefits of the special education service or program. It is easy, especially when the team wants the parents to feel good about the decision, to imply that speech, occupational therapy, individualized academic help and many other services will be provided. If promises are not kept, the parent can only feel cheated. And it is often the teacher who bears the brunt of the parent's frustrations.

* Avoid saying or implying that something appropriate for a child cannot be provided because of state or federal regulations. There are eligibility requirements necessary to be considered educationally handicapped. Beyond that, no requirements prohibit anything that is appropriate for a handicapped student as long as it can be justified. When state or federal regulations are used as reasons why something appropriate cannot be done, parents may check to find out why the regulations are hurting their child. If they find out the restrictions do not exist, they will feel deceived by the staffing team.

* Deciding whether or not a child is educationally handicapped is a sensitive issue. In some cases, a diagnosis has already been made by the parents or suspicions exist that the child is handicapped. However, in other cases parents will not have ever suspected their child was handicapped. Their perception of a "handicapped" child is probably of one who is visibly and very noticeably different from others. Because of predetermined ideas, it is essential, if communication is to continue, that what is meant by an educational handicapping condition be discussed. This includes mentioning such things as: (1) an educational handicapping condition may be observed in a learning situation but not in other places, and (2) it is related to state or federal requirements for school programs and does not necessarily involve the same requirements or severity as those used by

non-school agencies. If parents can be helped to accept the concept of an educational handicapping condition and not reject the diagnostic label involved, it is possible for the discussion of alternatives to occur without the parent emotionally withdrawing from the staffing or being on the defensive. (2)

* With physical handicaps or visual impairments, there is little likelihood the original diagnosis will change. This is often, but not always, true in handicaps such as learning disabilities, emotional disabilities and mental disabilities. There are situations where our measurements are too limited and the variables too complex to clearly identify the single or correct handicapping condition. While special educators may be aware of the limitations of diagnostic instruments, parents probably are not. Parents will usually assume the same accuracy exists for diagnosing learning problems that they feel exists for medical problems. This feeling is strengthened by our reference to such things as testing, assessment, diagnosis and prescription. With such a view of our skill, it can be understood that real anxiety can be created by changing the diagnostic label after six months, a year, or sometimes even more. The parent's perception would likely be that someone made a mistake or the error in diagnosis would not have occurred. Along with this is the parent's concern about the harm to their child as a result of the misdiagnosis. And, if the parent feels the new label is more negative, they may react against an attempt to change it. Either way it is a loss for good school-parent relations.

---

[2] *What is meant by a specific label may need to be reviewed with a parent many times and over a period of time for real understanding to occur.*

There is one way to lessen the severity of such a problem when it occurs. That is to have stressed in the staffing the difficulty of clearly establishing a diagnosis and indicating that with future information it could change. That discussion should be reflected in the record of the staffing. This honesty in having difficulty in pinpointing a clear diagnosis has other advantages. Other members of the team will be more likely to be open to other possible interpretations of the student's behavior in the future. Also, if anyone reviews the records at a future time when changes in student functioning have occurred, they will not be locked into the original diagnosis or question the competency of the original staffing team.

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By

Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

Section 5

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commerical products or organizations imply endorsement by the U. S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

It is easy to assume that parents should be involved in the instructional process because they are already involved in the development of the IEP. It is also a popular thing to do. Parent involvement is often associated with good teaching. However, a better rationale for involving parents is needed to assure that the efforts will be worthwhile.

Some reasons for involving parents include the following.

* Parents can be provided with a better understanding of their child's abilities and limitations.

* A more positive and supportive home situation for the student can be created.

* Attitudes about the school or program, if there have been unpleasant experiences, may be altered.

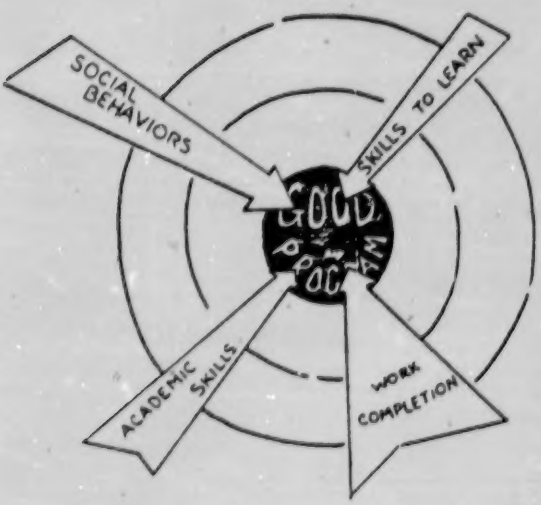
* Generalization of skills to the home and other non-school environments can be obtained.

* Rate of learning can be improved through additional student practice.

* Contingencies useful in producing desirable academic or social behavior at school can be identified.

Parents may want to be involved because their child is handicapped. Family support and acceptance is one of the few variables that research has identified as being important to the overall success of the student!

Once a rationale exists for including parents, a decision can be made on how to involve them. There are three levels of parental involvement. From the least to the most complex, they are (1) understanding the classroom program, (2) use of home contingencies for school performance, and (3) the practice of skills at home. The investment of parent time and the skill required increases from one level to another. Also, the amount of teacher time required for program design and communicating with parents increases with each level.



Involving Parents Through Helping Them To Understand the Classroom Program

Parents are involved in a classroom when their child attends it. However, their knowledge of what

is going on may be very limited. Increasing the communication flow to parents will automatically increase their involvement. This may appear to be a passive role, but just think how easy it is to become actively involved in the passive activity of watching a football game. Extra communication may be needed for another reason. The handicapped student may be unable to describe accurately, or at all, what is taking place at school. When this is true, parents can't ask or depend upon a response to, "What happened at school today?"

Messages sent home are a useful way to inform and involve parents. Some teachers of children who are unable to communicate, such as preschool or severely and profoundly handicapped students, use a notebook or stenographic pad to communicate with parents on a daily basis. This is time consuming, but it accomplishes the result of providing information as well as creates a way to obtain information from the home. It also provides some assurance to parents who may be anxious, because of the age of the child or the severity of the handicap, that their child is in good hands.

Such frequent communication would be impossible or unnecessary in many situations. A classroom newsletter could be an alternative vehicle for communication. The newsletter can be approached in a number of different ways.

Frequency of Classroom Newsletter	Contents of Classroom Newsletter
daily	review what has been done.
weekly	provide information about what will be studied.
bi-weekly	provide topics for dinner table discussion or activities around previous classroom activities.

monthly	summarize a unit of study.
quarterly	introduce a unit of study.
when special activities take place.	provide information on possible experiences that will enhance what is to be studied.

The potential of classroom newsletters is unlimited. New printing techniques make the use of banners and graphics inexpensive. The work of students can even be included. The newsletter, as a method for involving parents, will be most successful if it contains items that say: "Your child knows..., Please ask your child these questions..., You may wish to discuss..., It would be helpful if...," or, "Please send ..." Through the newsletter, you are giving the parent school-related activities to do at home, and that is parent involvement. Also, an invitation on the newsletter to call or send a note if parents have questions helps promote the feeling that the opportunity for more direct communication is there.

Parent handbooks, developed by the teacher, are another form of communication and offer parents the opportunity to become knowledgeable about the classroom program. A handbook for parents could include the purpose of the class, the schedule, an explanation of practices or procedures the teacher will be using (for example, a token economy system, a time-out procedure or teaming with another teacher for a subject), schedule of conferences, and an overview of the subject or subjects to be taught. The handbook could also include suggestions for parents such as how to help the student be more independent, acquire needed pre-vocational skills, what community experiences are beneficial to the student, and games or activities for the student to do with the parents or siblings. The age of the student and the type of handicap will have a bearing on what is appropriate.

Parent meetings are another method of involving parents. Meetings are more difficult because they require scheduling and a lot of planning. Meetings also have the inherent risk of failing because of a small turnout. Class sizes found in special education make fifty percent of the parents a much smaller "group" than a regular teacher who gets fifty percent of the parents to a meeting would have. To help insure success, visiting with parents about their interest and availability for a parent meeting before scheduling one is necessary.

There are ways to stimulate parent interest in attending. These include having the parents help select the topic, providing a student program, providing baby sitting, connecting the meeting with an evening meal (the parents could help pay), and providing an activity for siblings. Special education teachers may wish to jointly conduct parent meetings rather than hold them separately. This increases the number of possible participants and the likelihood of having a "group" feeling exist.

Parent meetings are hard work, and because all parents may not participate, teachers are often left with the feeling that it wasn't successful. There is another way to view this. All parents do not have the same need or ability to be involved or to interact with other parents of handicapped students. Parents who do have those needs to interact with other parents should be provided the opportunity. Support from and interaction with other parents can help them grow as parents of a handicapped child.

Involving Parents Through The Use of Home Contingencies For School Performance.

Using rewards that are available in the home environment to help bring about desirable academic

or social behavior at school can be a powerful tool. Rewards may include a number of things. Watching a favorite TV program, dessert, being read to by a parent or sibling, earning a record, or spending time with a parent in a favorite activity are only a few of the things that have been used. While this approach is not new, it has usually used to change the student's behavior. Our intent is to involve the parent in a school-parent partnership.

This level of parent involvement is an individualized approach, whereas the previous method of involving parents was directed at parents of all students in a class. In order to be successful with this level of parent involvement, teacher time is needed to do the following.

* identify the specific skill or behavior to be improved
* help parents understand the desired change
* help parents identify an appropriate reward
* determine the growth needed to earn the reward
* determine how information will be communicated to the parents about the student's performance so the reward can be given or denied.

Consistency on everyone's part is essential if such an approach is to work. The responsibility, for success largely rests with the teacher who is providing the instruction, observing the behavior, and communicating results. Once it is decided with the parents to start such a program, the teacher can't cancel it without sacrificing a degree of parental confidence.

In designing this level of parent involvement,

some ways to insure that it is more successful are the following.

* target skills to be learned and desirable social behaviors.

  This permits parents to reward what a child is doing and not focus on what is not being done.

* target academic skills and work completion.

  This permits parents to reward learning, which is what they expect to occur at school.

* arrange rewards, if possible, around non-cost activities and social experiences with the parents.

  This is a more natural and versatile type of reward system. It also accomplishes other purposes. It creates situations for positive interaction between the student and parents which is desirable, if the prior focus has been more on what the student can't do.

* set a date or level of performance for completion of the program.

  This will let everyone know when it is to be over.

* avoid initiating the first such program when a crisis exists.

  While this may not be possible, crisis situations almost always involve school behaviors not under the control of parents. Unintentionally, a stressful situation for the parents and negatively

charged home environment for the student can be created.

Home contingencies, if the program is successful, positively influence the student's work at school.

A less formal method of involving parents is through feedback on the student's growth in a specific area. This informal method capitalizes on the spontaneous and natural reinforcement that takes place when good reports come from school. With this method there is less need for the parents to have a full understanding of the skill or behavior that is being taught. The teacher operates on the basis that notes or telephone calls about student progress will produce a reinforcing situation for the student. It is important that the parent be informed that they will be receiving feedback about progress on a skill before it starts. Otherwise, the messages may receive little attention from the parents. To use this more general method of involving the parents, the teacher would do the following.

* contact the parents to initiate the program - "We are working on ____. I will be trying to keep you very informed of our progress because I know you are interested and want to know."

* communication to parents - daily or weekly notes or telephone calls. The student calls the parent during the day to report positive progress.

* contact the parents to conclude the program - "I want to let you know that we have mastered ____. I'll be keeping you informed on what we are doing, but I won't be sending notes (or calling)

as frequently as I have been."

The last step is important. A withdrawal of notes or telephone calls without a reason can cause parents to be concerned. Parents, as well as the student, find the communication reinforcing. Gradually reducing the frequency of communication is generally better than an abrupt halt.

Involving parents Through The practice of Skills At Home

The most complex level of parental involvement consists of having parents assist with skill practice at home. To be successful, the activity to be performed at home must be highly structured, or the

parents must be well trained to provide the practice. If the student's not practicing the skills correctly, everyone can be frustrated by lack of progress. If the activity is successful, the added correct practice at home will accelerate the rate at which the skill can be mastered. Frequent correct practice is the key to learning and also retention.

The advantages of parent involvement in learning skills is well recognized. Programs like the Monterey Language Program and SRA Distar Reading Program have home components. Teachers and occupational therapists who work with moderately and severely handicapped students on feeding, dressing and other self-help skills have long recognized the benefits of parent involvement. Parents can be instrumental in promoting and reinforcing desired behaviors. A task has not been fully accomplished until the skill is generalized to the home environment.

What makes a home program work? In order to be successful a home program needs to provide appropriate practice, needs to be easily carried out by the parents, and needs to be manageable for the teacher. Success is more likely to occur when the following steps are taken.

* Select a skill that would normally occur in the home, or one for which practice can be provided without requiring a great deal of equipment or materials.

* Select a skill in which the parent has an interest, and one that will require no more than 15 minutes of parent time each evening.

* Initiate a home program only after the skill has been introduced at school and student accuracy is between 80-90% at school. This promotes correct practice, a positive and safe situation for the student, and success

for the student and parent. The result of the added home practice will be over-learning with the skill quickly reaching the automatic level.

* Design the home program so the parents can use the same procedure each evening. This increases parent efficiency and reduces the amount of training time needed.

* Create some method for the parent to provide feedback on the performance of the student at home to the teacher. For example, the parent could relay that 17 of 20 were correct, had difficulty only on the words "with" and "there", or 250 words were read in five minutes. This information helps the parent and student focus on accuracy as well as provides the teacher with data.

If the parent is expected to do something at home, training is required. The teacher will need to demonstrate for the parent, observe, and provide feedback so parents can learn the procedure. Most procedures are simple enough that little time will be required. This parent training and the specificity of the task will make the home program successful. Training is more than telling parents, when they inquire about how to help their child, that they should work on sight words or math facts. If the student is handicapped, the latter directions to parents can result in little or incorrect learning. And the student and parents will probably be confused and frustrated. Following are some examples of home-school programs which have been used successfully.

Examples Of Programs For Use By Parents

I. Program Objective: The student will spell 80% of the words correctly on weekly spelling tests.

Purpose Of Home Activity: To provide guided practice for the student on assigned spelling words.

Home Procedure:

1. The student will bring home the results of a pre-test each Monday.
2. The student will read each word for the parent.
3. The parent will dictate the words missed on the pre-test for the student to spell orally.
4. The student will copy each word misspelled during dictation three times correctly. After each word is copied, the word is presented again for the student to spell orally.
5. After all words are copied correctly and spelled orally, the parent will dictate the words missed on the school pre-test for the student to write.
6. The student will correct his/her own work.

How Often/How Much: Monday through Thursday, not to exceed 15 Min.

Communication: The student will bring the spelling test (number 5) to school each day.

Comments: To insure student success the number and difficulty of words

can be controlled. For poor spellers, a pre-test may be omitted and the student can select from his/her list of words that are to be mastered. The number of words to be learned will be related to the student's ability and motivation.

II. Program Objective: The student will master with 100% accuracy the basic math facts.

Purpose Of Home Activity: To provide additional practice on math facts.

Home Procedure:

1. The teacher will define the math facts to be studied at any given time.

2. Using flash cards, the parents will present the set of cards to the child three time.

3. Whenever the child is incorrect, he/she is asked to work the problem using concrete objects (matches, cards, toothpicks, etc.

How Often/How Much: Not to exceed 15 minutes. It can be done on any nights agreed to with the more frequency the better.

Communication: On a sheet provided by the teacher, the parents will indicate the facts that were correct on the first response on all three trails. The student will bring this to school on appropriate days.

Criteria To Change Content: Facts will be deleted when the student has performed them correctly three nights in a row without error and on one trial at school. New facts will then be added.

Comments: This type of design works best when it can be specifically defined for the parent. For example, two digit numerals that equal 20 or less identifies a stopping point for the program. This design also lends itself to charting and sending the chart home to parents when the program is over. To insure student success, the initial home activity should contain problems the student has already mastered. Then, the teacher can systematically add facts that need to be worked on.

III. Program Objective: The student will complete 30 math facts correctly in 60 seconds on a worksheet.

Purpose Of Home Activity: To assist the student to increase his/her speed of response in math.

Home Procedure:

1. The teacher will provide a worksheet to be completed at home.

2. The parents will time the activity, giving the child 60 seconds to do the task.

3. The student will correct his/her work after the 60 seconds.

4. The number correctly completed within the 60 seconds will be placed at the top of the page.

How Much/How Often: To be done at least three nights a week.

Communication: The completed worksheet is to be returned to the teacher.

Criteria To Change Content: Content will change when the student meets the objective of 30 facts in 60 seconds for three evenings in a row and one session in school.

Comments: Content needs to be limited to facts the student has mastered, but not at a rate that is useful. Parents should be helped to realize that speed is the purpose, but accuracy is also important. Rate will drop as changes are made from addition to subtraction, multiplication to division, or as mixed problems are given. A number of worksheets with the problems in different sequences are necessary to prevent memorization of a sequence. The activity lends itself well to graphing.

This design can be applied easily to sight-word vocabulary or reading rate.

IV. Program Objective: The student will name with 100% accuracy the primary colors.

Purpose Of The Activity: To assist the child in learning primary colors.

Home Procedure:

1. The teacher will designate the color to be learned, for example, yellow.

2. Using cards with pictures of yellow objects, the parents will present the cards to the student with the question, "Is this yellow?"

3. When student accuracy is at the 100% level on number 2, cards are presented introducing a second color with the direction, "Is this yellow?"

4. When the above step is at 100% accuracy, cards are presented in groups of three colors with the same direction.

5. When the above is mastered at 100% accuracy, the student is asked to find something in the house that is yellow.

How Much/How Often: Five minutes at a time is sufficient. Less will be needed when the student catches on. It is desirable if it can be done twice during an evening.

Criteria To Change Content: New colors should be introduced when the student can locate in the school environment objects of that color with out error.

Communication: Notes to and from the school describing the current level of performance of the student.

Comments: This requires a lot of cards with objects in different colors. It must be stressed to the parent that initially only one concept is being taught, i.e. what is and what is not yellow. Do not name the non-yellow colors! Once yellow has been mastered, the student should be asked to identify it periodically for maintenance.

This same design can be modified for learning letters of the alphabet or numerals.

Teacher-directed programs implemented by the parents can be so effective that the teacher may want to keep one going all the time. This may not be appropriate. Often parents and students need a break from a nightly routine, and from skill practice. If the program has been successful, a relationship should exist that permits an open discussion between the parents, teachers, and maybe student about the desirability of starting another home acitvity.

Deciding Where to Start in Involving Parents

The teacher has many options in involving parents. It may be helpful to consider the age and severity of the student's handicap and the current level of parent involvement. If parents do not have a good understanding of the classroom program, that maybe the best place to begin. It will be easier to accomplish other levels of involvement when an understanding of the program exists. A teacher can also combine levels of involvement. For example, a parent meeting can be used to prepare all interested parents to use home program for

math facts, reading, and time-telling skill practice. The parents can use the same procedure and the teacher can control the content through the level of the tasks sent home to practice.

Don't Over-Involve Parents

Too much parent involvement can create an unhealthy climate for the student at home. If the involvement causes the parents to focus on the "handicap" and the "differentness" of the student, healthy parent-child relations can be damaged. Parents are not employed as teachers. It is important to remember that parents need some time for the following:

* other children
* each other
* dealing with other problems
* reading
* fixing the car
* re-decorating
* resting
* watching TV
* and all the other things adults do.

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By

Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

PARENTS AND THE ANNUAL REVIEW

Section 6

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

PARENTS AND THE ANNUAL REVIEW

PL94-142 states that parents have the right to be involved at three major points: the development of the IEP, the placement decision and the review of progress related to the IEP--the annual review. If parents have been effectively involved at the first two points, involving them in the annual review should not be difficult. The formal reference regarding the annual review in the Federal Register, August 1975, states that:

> *Each public agency shall initiate and conduct meetings to periodically review each child's individualized education program and if appropriate revise its provision. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year.*

The intent of this requirement is that parents be informed about their child's progress. The focus of the annual review meeting is the IEP. The team that initially developed the IEP should be present at the annual review meeting. The team consists of the teachers, someone other than the teacher who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education, the student, if appropriate, and the parents. The parents or the school may also involve other persons at their discretion.

The annual review meeting has the appearance of being a formalized parent-teacher conference. All of the rules which govern conducting good parent-teacher conferences apply to the annual review meeting. It may be more successful than a regular conference because the parent and the teacher have the IEP to guide the discussion.

Preparing For The Annual Review Meeting

The teacher has an important role in the annual review meeting. He/she has been working on the goals and objectives, knows the parents and student best, and has the data on student progress. The parents, especially if they have been involved in the instructional program, will be looking to the teacher for information and direction.

The steps involved in preparing for the annual review include the following.

1. Determining The Major Topics To Be Discussed

To determine the major topics to be discussed, two questions need to be answered. 1) What do we wish to discuss? and 2) What will the parents want to discuss? The answers to these questions provide the content for the other steps in the preparation process. All of the IEP is open for

discussion. In addition to the goals and objectives, the current level of functioning, extent of integration, and special services may be addressed. The age of the student, nature of handicapping condition, presence or absence of other handicaps and length of time in special education all influence the amount of attention that will need to be given to each area.

2. Determining If All The Information Is Available

It is a waste of time to hold the annual review meeting until all necessary information is available. If it is known that the parent believes speech therapy is needed, the school has some responsibility to collect the data to discuss that issue at the meeting. If the parent feels that more integration is possible, some preparahon for discussion should occur ahead of time. From a parent's point of view it can be frustrating to be told that important information is not available, and that another meeting needs to be scheduled because the "right" people are not in attendance.

The teacher should have samples of student work, pre-post test scores, graphs, and other information to use to show student progress toward goals and objectives. These should be organized for presentation at the meeting.

3. Determining Who Will Participate From The School

The focus of the meeting should dictate who needs to be present. The smaller the number of people the better. The teacher can share information provided by the speech clinician, psychologist, occupational therapist and others. Usually, only when their information is critical to the planning for the following year should support personnel be present. This is not to discriminate against them, but to control for parent comfort, conserve pro-

fessional resources, and to allow for an in-depth discussion of the critical issues. (Where students do not receive special education instructional services, support personnel, such as the speech clinician or physical therapist, may be considered to be the teacher.)

4. Scheduling The Annual Review Meeting

When the content and people to be involved have been determined the annual review meeting can be scheduled. A few things need to be remembered when determining time and place for the meeting.

* The meeting needs to be at a time and place convenient to the parents.

* The more people that participate the more time that will be needed.

* The more complicated the issues are in regard to programming for the following year, the more time that will be needed.

Parents must be given enough time to understand the issues discussed.

Inviting Parents To The Annual Review Meeting

Again, messages that parents receive will affect their decision to participate. The message can communicate, "This is something we have to do, and you can come if you want," or "We are doing something important and we would like you to be part of it." Who invites the parents, the explanation of the meeting and the explanation of the parents' role will all influence the parents' decision and attitude.

If a successful annual review meeting is desired there are a few things the school can do to help bring it about.

* Explain the agenda for the annual review

meeting and who will be involved prior to the meeting.

* Invite the parents to consider what they want to have discussed ahead of time.

  An unexpected telephone call requesting their questions is rather unfair to the parents. They should have the opportunity to think about and to discuss their questions together before being asked to give them to the school. If the parents are working with their child at home on a particular goal/objective, they can bring in information about their child's progress.

* Provide the parents with a written explanation of the annual review meeting and issues/topics to be discussed ahead of time. This gives them a chance to get prepared.

Involving The Student

Student involvement in the annual review meeting is important, as is involving students in the development of the IEP. If the student was involved in the IEP meeting he/she should be involved in the annual review process. If students are to be involved, they should also have the opportunity to contribute questions or to identify issues that need to be discussed prior to the meeting.

Conducting The Annual Review Meeting

An agenda showing what will occur during the meeting is a useful tool. It can serve as a reference for everyone, providing information about what is to be accomplished and the order in which it will be completed. An example is shown below.

Annual Review Agenda

1. Review of current functioning at beginning of year.

2. Review of goals and objectives.

3. Review of progress toward the goals and objectives.

4. Review of extent of participation in general education.

5. Review of special services.

6. Major needs for the following year.

The agenda should provide room for the participants to make notes during the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting it should be explained that the meeting will review progress and plan for the following year. The agenda can help parents understand the steps to be followed. Equal time will not be spent on all of the items. Most of the time will be spent on reviewing the goals and objectives, progress made, and the identification of major needs for the following year.

All of the information on the student's progress cannot be reviewed in the amount of time available. If this is attempted, there may be too much information to digest. The teacher needs to make some decision about what should be emphasized. Generally, the interests of the parent and identification of major needs for the following year should be emphasized. Parent understanding can be increased by showing student work samples, results of pre-post tests, or examples of tasks that can and cannot be done by the student.

Since the teacher presents a student progress report, the teacher will probably present most of the information that will be used to determine

major needs for the following year. The parents can then respond to this information with questions or suggestions. It is important not to overwhelm the parents with too much information. Two or three broad goals that contain specific skills should be sufficient. For example, a need might be to "interact positively with other students". This could be explained as including such things as cooperative play in game situations, sharing in class, asking others for help, and lessening of name-calling toward others. Another example could be "growth in vocational readiness". It could be defined as including interviewing skills, ability to complete job applications and the ability to use public transportation independently. Giving the parents a broad label under which the specific skills are listed will help them categorize and remember needs. It will also help parents be realistic about their childs needs and prevent situations where a parent feels that since their child has mastered a specific skill, he or she is now ready to be returned to the general education program.

Concluding The Annual Review Meeting

If sufficient information is present, new IEP can be developed at the annual review meeting. Someone should be designated as the person for the parents to contact should they have questions about anything discussed in the annual review meeting. While most will not find the need to call, knowing they may call if they choose is important. It is further confirmation that the school cares and wants the parents to understand.

Should The Parents Attend The Meeting?

This must seem like an unlikely question to ask, especially when the discussion has centered around meaningful involvement of parents. There is no option about having the meeting or giving parents the opportunity to participate. However,

it is unfair to ask them to get off work, to arrange for a sitter or to find transportation if new information does not exist. This is especially true where parents are informed, have been involved, or have recently had a conference with the teacher. Parents should not be discouraged from attending, but what will be discussed and parent options should be clearly presented. An annual review meeting using the telephone may be an alternative. When parents take the time to come and discuss their child, it is important they leave with the feeling that the meeting was worthwhile. If parents do not have this feeling, a school-parent partnership does not exist. If the parents choose not to come, an annual review meeting can be held with the student.

If parents do not attend the annual review meeting, attempts to involve them must be documented by the school. The attempts can be documented with notes from telephone calls or with copies of correspondence. If a form is used at the annual review, efforts made to involve the parents can be written on it. If the review is conducted via telephone, that should also be noted on the form or somewhere in the records.

ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By
Jerry Caster

And Modified By The
MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH PARENTS

Section 7

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U. S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH PARENTS

Effective communication and involvement of parents is a powerful tool to prevent conflict. Where communication is open, parent concerns are aired and some means exist to resolve differences of opinions. Unfortunately, some conflict with parents of handicapped children can be expected. The emotions and requirements connected with parenting a handicapped child make it possible for parent expectations for the child and school to be inappropriate. Likewise, limitations in the science of assessment, lack of experience with the IEP process, shortage of resources, and the responsibility of keeping parents informed and communication open all make it possible for the school to be in error or to unintentionally alienate parents.

In many ways there is little difference between a conflict and a difference of opinion, at least not in the facts of an issue. The critical difference is the heat generated, the feeling of "rightness", and the feeling the other party is choosing not to cooperate. It is this emotional level and the need to <u>prove</u> that the other party is wrong that differentiates a conflict from a difference of opinion. This is why the resolution of the problem, whatever it is, may be unsatisfactory to someone, and maybe to everyone. When there is conflict, everyone loses - the school, the parents, and especially the student.

In working with parents and other educators, conflict at some level is inevitable. However, it is not necessary to assume that conflict is unresolvable, or that conflict is necessarily bad. Given this, it is important to remember that conflict needs to be managed. Listed below are four ways that educators often use to manage conflict with little success, and finally a procedure which looks at conflict in a positive, honest approach.

AVOIDING COMING TO GRIPS WITH CONFLICT. Many people find the easiest way to deal with conflict is to deny that it exists. This type of approach is characterized by "looking the other way." Another similar approach is for people to maintain neutrality and refuse to state an opinion on any issues that they consider to be controversial. While these persons may believe that this approach doesn't get anyone mad at them, they should also realize that conflict is not solved in this manner. Instead, it continues to grow in a "cancerous" fashion.

SMOOTHING OVER THE CONFLICT. A second negative approach to managing conflict is an attempt to smooth over any disagreement. Here the individual attempts to maintain a harmonious atmosphere at all cost. There is an attempt to cajole people into agreement by presenting a "rosy" picture of a given solution, emphasizing the positive implication. Humor may also be interjected to give a feeling of friendliness. These tactics may serve to keep the conflict below the surface, but they do not solve problems.

SUPPRESSING DISAGREEMENTS. Another ineffective approach to managing conflict is for one of the parties involved in the conflict to simply suppress any opposition to his point of view. This approach is easily adopted by persons who are in a position of authority. Others may, however, employ this tactic by assuming an authoritative role and attempting to "outshout" and "bully" the opposition. Similarly, these individuals may ridicule the

ideas and personalities of others who disagree with them. This type of conflict management may result in a temporary end to the open conflict, but the basic differences remain and will likely reappear in the future.

SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE. This fourth approach centers around compromise. Each party is expected to "give a little to get a little." While the result may not be the most positive, both parties have gotten at least a portion of what they wanted. While the compromise approach is often viewed as a positive way of solving problems, its goal is not to seek the best possible solution but rather an acceptable one. The result is often a compromise solution that is mediocre in nature and leaves each party only partially satisfied with and committed to the decision which has been reached.

DIRECTLY CONFRONTING CONFLICT. A more effective way to approach conflict is through a direct confrontation of the problem. Disagreements are brought out into the open and examined and evaluated by those persons directly involved. Candid discussion aimed at identifying and resolving the underlying cause of the disagreement is encouraged. Some may resist this approach because of a fear that feelings may be hurt or that discussion of this type will weaken the position of the person in authority. A person holding this attitude loses sight of the true goal of education - to serve the handicapped student rather than to cater to the insecurities of either parents or educators.

It would be nice if there were a single solution to conflict. There isn't. An important place for the school to start is with the assumption that the parents could be right and the school wrong. With that as a beginning, the following suggestions should be useful in trying to resolve conflict when it occurs.

Listen To The Parents

It may be there is agreement, but no one knows it. Listening to what the parent has to say, and sharing information with the parent may reveal that no one has had a complete picture and that a solution acceptable to everyone can be reached. Active listening will at least permit real issues to be identified.

If the conflict is with the teacher, then the discussion might involve the principal. If it is with the school, then someone from the Department of Special Education might be involved. It is important the parents feel that the people involved include someone without a vested interest which is opposed to theirs. Of course, this is assuming the conflict has not been resolved with the parties directly involved.

Neutralize The Feeling of Conflict

A part of active listening involves objectivity. This is why it may be desirable to involve the principal or someone from the central office in the discussion. Neutralizing the atmosphere of conflict requires establishing the intent of everyone. If it can be established that whatever is best for the student should prevail, and everyone wins if that occurs, the battle is over. Then a problem solving process exists. This may involve direct questioning on the part of someone. For example, the parents and the teacher, principal, consultant, etc. can be asked if they "want what's best for the child." Then, they can be asked if they believe the others "want what's best for the child". If they agree that everyone desires the same outcome, a basis for agreement exists - a good place to start.

With such a basis, it can be understood that if there are different views, it is because of a different perspective about what is best for the child. This is important. An advocate for the child with a different opinion is easier to work with than an uncaring adversary. This is a positive perspective which should keep anyone from feeling like a "loser".

Create A Question That Can Be Answered

If the problem can be defined in terms of a question or questions, then a strategy for answering them can be developed. This means it is only necessary to collect the data and review the information to decide what should be done. The more objective the data, the easier it is to obtain consensus on the interpretation. A mutually acceptable way of deciding the issue before the information is collected is important.

Try The Parents' Suggestion If Possible

If the parents wish something for the child that is feasible, it probably should be tried. The only exception would be if it is not feasible

or if it would be harmful to the child. The reason for this is that if the parents are out-voted or judged wrong by a higher authority, they may submit, but they may never endorse the decision. There may always be the feeling they were right, or "If only the school had done what we wanted". Accompanying such a feeling is often a passive resistance that's never supportive of the school program or student. No one wins.

Help The Parent Find An Advocate

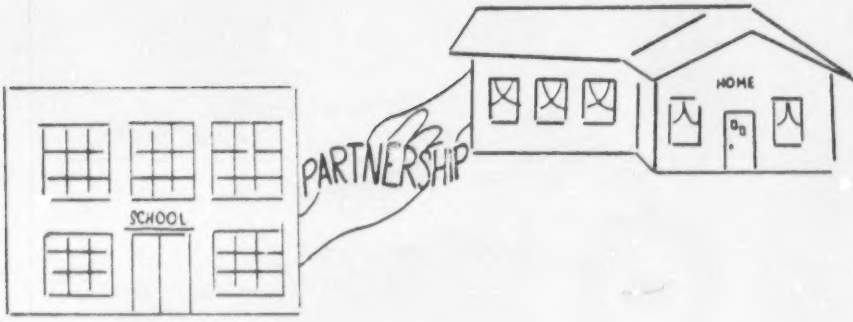
If the conflict has not been resolved, it may be helpful to suggest to the parent that they enlist the help of a neutral, but informed third party. Someone who is not going to automatically support the school or the parent, but will look only at what is best for the child. This might be a representative from the Association for Retarded Citizens, Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, Legal Aid Society, or anyone else that they would feel comfortable with. To do this requires that the school have enough confidence in what they are doing to want someone else to help the parent understand what is recommended or being done. And, it also requires that the school be open enough that if their position is not supported they would not feel that they had "lost". The school must go through the entire conflict process feeling that what is desired is what is best for the child, and if something other than what the school has proposed or is doing is discovered to be best, everyone still "wins".

Explain The Right To A Hearing With the State Department of Education

Many parents will submit to the wishes of the school before requesting a formal hearing with the State Department of Education. This is unfortunate. It is a way for both parties to have information objectively reviewed and a decision made. If the atmosphere can be one of determining what is best when a difference of opinion

exists, then everyone can be satisfied with the outcome. No one loses.

> *"In working with people there is no escaping the fact that differences exist among us ... Consequently, we must learn how to recognize and manage our differences if we hope to be successful ... Our differences result naturally from our individuality. Each of us brings to an encounter with others our own experiences, our way of perceiving the world and other people, and our own expectations and assumptions. The important thing to recognize is that differences are natural, should be expected, and are a source of creativity as well as potential disruption of our relationships." (Organization Development Workshop Trainers Manual, NARC, 1967)*



ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Developed By

Jerry Caster

And Modified By The

MIDWEST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

RESOURCES:

Appendix A
and
Appendix B

Section 8

1979

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under contract number 300-78-0023. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Permission to duplicate this product is granted by the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) contingent upon the MRRC being given credit for its development.

SELECTED P.L. 94-142 RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO PARENT RIGHTS *

Governmental rules and regulations are developed to define the requirements for compliance with laws. A formal procedure exists for the development of those rules which include public hearings, legal review and a process for revision prior to approval. The excerpts below are from the Rules that govern compliance with P.L. 94-142 and they represent the major obligations of the local education agency to the handicapped child and his/her parents germane to this document. A complete review of the Rules is suggested for a full understanding of the requirements of P.L. 94-142.

Individualized Education Programs

121a.340 Definition

As used in this part, the term "individualized education program" means a written statement for a handicapped child that is developed and implemented in accordance with 121a341 - 121a.349.

IEPs defined

121a.346 Content of individualized education program.

The individualized education program for each child must include:

(a) A statement of the child's present levels of educational performance;

Required contents of an IEP.

* Federal Register, Volume 42, No. 163--Tuesday, August 23, 1977.

(b) A statement of annual goals, including short term instructional objectives;

(c) A statement of the specific special education and related services to be provided to the child, and the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular educational programs;

(d) The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of the services; and

(e) Appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the short term instructional objectives are being achieved.

121a.349 Individualized education program accountability.

Each public agency must provide special education and related services to a handicapped child in accordance with an individualized education program. However, Part B of the Act does not require that any agency, teacher, or other person be held accountable if a child does not achieve the growth projected in the annual goals and objectives.

Student progress not guaranteed.

121a.343 Meetings

(a) General. Each public agency is responsible for initiating and conducting meetings for the purpose of developing,

IEP reviewed annually.

reviewing, and revising a handicapped child's individualized education program.

(b) Handicapped children currently served.

If the public agency has determined that a handicapped child will receive special education during school year 1977-1978, a meeting must be held early enough to insure that an individualized education program is developed by October 1, 1977.

(c) Other handicapped children.

For a handicapped child who is not included under paragraph (b) of this action, a meeting must be held within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services.

(d) Review.

Each public agency shall initiate and conduct meetings to periodically review each child's individualized education program and if appropriate revise its provision. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year.

121a.344 Participants in meetings.

(a) General. The public agency shall insure that each meeting includes the following participants:

(1) A representative of the public agency, other than the child's teacher, who is qualified to provide or

Only some school personnel must participate in meetings.

supervise the provision of, special education.

(2) The child's teacher.

(3) One or both of the child's parents, subject to 121a. 345.

(4) The child, where appropriate.

(5) Other individuals at the discretion of the parent or agency.

(b) Evaluation personnel.

For a handicapped child who has been evaluated for the first time, the public agency shall insure:

(1) That a member of the evaluation team participates in the meeting; or

(2) That the representative of the public agency, the child's teacher, or some other person is present at the meeting who is knowledgeable about the evaluation procedures used with the child and is familiar with the results of the evaluation.

121a.345 Parent participation.

(a) Each public agency shall take steps to insure that one or both of the parents of the handicapped child are present at each meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including:

Parents must be given the opportunity to participate.

(1) Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to insure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and

(2) Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

(b) The notice under paragraph (a) (1) of this section must indicate the purpose, time, and location of the meeting, and who will be in attendance.

(c) If neither parent can attend, the public agency shall use other methods to insure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls.

(d) A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the public agency is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In this case the public agency must have a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place such as:

(1) Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls.

(2) Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received, and

(3) Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

(e) The public agency shall take whatever action is necessary to insure that the parent understands the proceedings at a meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents who are deaf or whose native language is other than English.

The school must be able to show that parents were given the opportunity to participate.

(f) The public agency shall give the parent, on request a copy of the individualized education program.

Placement of Handicapped Students

121a.553 Placement procedures.

(a) In interpreting evaluation data and in making placement decisions each public agency shall:

(1) Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior;

Requirements for placement.

(2) Insure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered;

(3) Insure that the placement decision is made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation date, and the placement options; and

(4) Insure that the placement decision is made in conformity with the least restrictive environment rules in 121a.550 - 121a.554

(b) If a determination is made that a child is handicapped and needs special education and related services, an individualized education program must be

developed for the child in accordance with 121a.340 - 121a.349 of Subpart C.

121a.550 General

(a) Each State educational agency shall insure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures which meet the requirements of 121a.550 - 121a.556.

(b) Each public agency shall insure:

(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Students should be educated with non-handicapped students where possible.

121a.551 Continuum of alternative placements.

(a) Each public agency shall insure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of handicapped children for special education and related services.

A variety of options must exist.

(b) The continuum required under paragraph (a) of this section must:

(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under 121a.13 of Subpart A (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions), and

(2) Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

121a.552 Placements.

Each public agency shall insure that:

(a) Each handicapped child's educational placement;

(1) Is determined at least annually,

(2) Is based on his or her individualized education program, and

(3) Is as close as possible to the child's home;

Students are to be educated in the school that they would otherwise attend if at all possible.

(b) The various alternative placements included under 121a.551 are available to the extent necessary to implement the individualized education program for each handicapped child;

(c) Unless a handicapped child's individualized education program requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he or she would attend if not handicapped; and

(d) In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs.

121a.553 Nonacademic settings.

In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extra-curricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods, and the services and activities set forth in 121a.306 of Subpart C, each public agency shall insure that each handicapped child participates with non-handicapped children in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child.

Students are to be served with non-handicapped students in non-academic settings.

Reevaluation

121a.534 Reevaluation.

Each State and local educational agency shall insure:

(a) That each handicapped child's individualized education program is reviewed in accordance with 121a.340 - 121a.349 of Subpart C, and

(b) That an evaluation of the child, based on procedures which meet the requirements under 121a.532, is conducted every three years or more frequently if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests an evaluation.

At least every three years a reevaluation must be conducted.

Right to Review

121a.510 Administrative appeal; impartial review.

(a) If the hearing is conducted by a public agency other than the State educational agency, any party aggrieved by the findings and decision in the hearing may appeal to the State educational agency.

(b) If there is an appeal, the State educational agency shall conduct an impartial review of the hearing. The official conducting the review shall:

(1) Examine the entire hearing record;

(2) Insure that the procedures at the hearing were consistent with the requirements of due process;

(3) Seek additional evidence if necessary. If a hearing is held to receive additional evidence, the rights in 121a.508 apply;

(4) Afford the parties an opportunity for oral or written argument, or both, at the discretion of the reviewing official;

(5) Make an independent decision on completion of the review; and

(6) Give a copy of written findings and the decision to the parties;

Parents have the right to an impartial review of the actions of the school, which includes their opportunity to be involved, diagnosis, placement and appropriateness of the program.

Civil action may be taken.

(c) The decision made by the reviewing official is final, unless a party brings a civil action under 121a.512.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON EFFECTIVELY INCLUDING PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

These materials are only suggested as possible resources. The MRRC does not endorse or promote these particular items.

1. INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVELY INVOLVING PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN: IMPROVING PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

This book is designed for teachers but has practical application for parents also. It deals with the following areas: Understanding the Child and His Family (Preparing for the Individual Conference, Listening to Parents, Comparing Perceptions); Providing Parents with Information (Preparing Information for Parents, Parent Group Meetings): and Problem Solving with Parents (Defining the Problem, Selecting and Applying Reinforcers, Setting Up a Reinforcement Menu, Parent Training Groups). 1975. 187 pages. $5.55.

Roger Kroth
Love Publishing Company
6635 East Villanova Place
Denver CO 80222

COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR HANDICAPPING CHILDREN NEWSLETTER

This newsletter comes out monthly and covers news in special education, mental health,

national and state legislation, and other special columns.

Coordinating Council for Handicapped Children
407 South Dearborn Street, Room 680
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 939-3513

DIRECTIONS I - A GUIDEBOOK FOR FAMILIES
DIRECTIONS II - A WORKBOOK FOR FAMILIES

Directions I and II. The manuals (II is a workbook providing parents with forms, programs and exercises) offer a readable, understandable description of P.L. 94-142: The Education For All The Handicapped Act, and are filled with useful suggestions to parents on how they may become involved in their child's individual educational program. The manual presents helpful information to parents in a logical, sequential manner to promote maximum involvement of parents in their educational program. 1978. Free by request (limited).

Western Los Angeles Direction Service
11300 South La Cienega Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90304
(213) 645-9044

A FAMILY's GUIDE TO: CEREBRAL PALSY

Tonia S. Twigger. 1978. 29 pages, single copies free upon request.

A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO: DOWN'S SYNDROME

Tonia S. Twigger. 1978. 30 pages, single copies free upon request.

A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO: EPILEPSY

Tonia S. Twigger. 1978. 29 pages, single copies free upon request.

A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO CLEFT LIP AND PALATE

Tonia S. Twigger. 1978. 22 pages, single copies free upon request.

Written specifically for parents, these booklets contain diagrams and resources for further reading.

Lane County Direction Service Coordinating Office
Center on Human Development
University of Oregon
1590 Willamette Street
Eugene, OR 97401

FOR PARENTS ONLY...PRACTICAL ADVICE TO PARENTS ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

For Parents Only...is a handbook written for parents of handicapped children. This handbook provides parents practical suggestions on how to work cooperatively with school personnel to plan an appropriate educational program for their child. The handbook lists practical ideas that parents can utilize in preparing for the IEP meeting; participating in the IEP meeting; and working with the school after the IEP meeting. National parent organizations and resources are also contained in this handbook. 1979. 39 pages. Available through ERIC. *

Midwest Regional Resource Center
Drake University
Des Moines, IA 50311
(515) 271-3936

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH PARENTS: THE TEACHERS BEST FRIEND

This book is designed for teachers, but has practical application and knowledge for parents also. It deals with communication, physical arrangements at an IEP meeting, preparing for

---

* ERIC DOCUMENT and REPRODUCTION
2020 14th Street, North
P.O. Box 190
Arlington, VA 22201

the meeting, and involving parents in teaching their children. 1977. 133 pages. $7.95.

Ms. Leatha Bennet and Ferris Henson II
Learning Concepts
2501 North Lamar
Austin, TX 78705
(512) 474-6911

LAW AND THE HANDICAPPED. A Primer for Illinois Parents

There are four main sections in the manual. The first is made up of answers to questions that may be important to parents of handicapped children; the second is a sample case from detection of the child's problems to the writing of the IEP; the third is a glossary of terms which parents may encounter when working with schools; the fourth is a list of service providers. 1978. 51 pages. Free.

Illinois Regional Resource Center
Department of Learning and Development
Northern Illinois University
Graham Hall 243
De Kalb, IL 60115

PARENT CONFERENCES IN THE SCHOOLS
Procedures for Developing Effective Partnerships

Written for educators, this book offers specific guidelines for working effectively with parents of children in the public schools. It underscores the need to work with parents as parents or coequals so that the tasks of identifying children with special needs and of providing appropriate services or programs to meet those needs can be accomplished as soon as possible. 1978. 285 pages.

Stuart M. Losen and Bert Diament
Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
Boston, MA

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO PARENTS

A handbook that covers the following topics: Parent to Parent: If You Suspect Something Is Wrong: When Trouble Starts in School; What To Look For In Selecting A School Program; Making Things Happen: What About Jobs; Where To Turn For Financial Aid; Bridging The Information Gap; Why Join A Parent Group; A Word About Attitudes. 1977.

COMMON SENSE FROM CLOSER LOOK

A quarterly publication which offers timely and practical information to parents of handicapped children.
Both publications free upon request.

Closer Look
Box 1942
Washington, DC 20013

THE RIGHT OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS TO AN EDUCATION- Primer 1
SEEING THE IEP THROUGH THE EYES OF A PARENT - Primer 2
PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS - Primer 3

These primers are overviews of particular sections of Public Law 94-142, written for parents. 1978. Single copies free upon request.

Exceptional Family Advocacy Center
Center on Human Development
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

YOU AND YOUR SPECIAL CHILD: AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR NEVADA PARENTS

This book is divided into three sections. The first deals with definitions of handicapping conditions, the law, the IEP, parents and children's rights; the second addresses how to get special services and mailing information of Nevada School Districts; the third

is a county listing for educational services in Nevada. It is a parent information handbook developed in conjunction with the Nevada State Department. 1978. 168 pages. Free.

Southwest Regional Resource Center
University of Utah
2363 Foothill Drive, Suite 6
Salt Lake City, UT 84109

YOUR CHILD'S RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

This handbook provides information regarding federal and state laws affecting special education in New York. Handicapped categories are defined in simple language with parents rights and New York procedural safeguards outlined. 1978. 31 pages. Free.

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Office for Education of Children
With Handicapping Conditions
Albany, NY 12234

94-142 AND-504. NUMBERS THAT ADD UP

Contents include: What the Laws Cover, The School District's Responsibilities, How the Evaluation Process Works, Your Rights When You Disagree With the School, Resources. 1978. 47 pages. $1.25.

Children's Defense Fund
1520 New Hampshire Avenue. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

II.

TRAINING RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVELY INVOLVING PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Parents and Teachers Together (for the benefit of Children) is an action plan for practical parent involvement. It's an unprecedented, head-on, cooperative approach for getting the most out of the classroom by bringing parents in. If your school is not now involved in such a program, Parents and Teachers Together (for the Benefit of Children) will show you how to start - what to do after you've started and where to go once the direction is set. (If you're already involved in a parent-involvement program, these materials will show you how to expand it - how to increase its impact.) This NEA edupak © is packaged in a shelf unit for permanent storage - allowing the individual components to be used separately. Includes: filmstrips, transparencies, cassettes, booklets. 1977. $88.42.

Both available from:
National Education Association
NEA Distribution Center
Academic Building
Sawmill Road
West Haven, CT 06516
(203) 934-2669

PARENTS AND EDUCATORS: PARTNERS IN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

This is a 1½ day workshop for educators, but could also include parents. The workshop is activity-based and addresses the following issues: thorough knowledge of the student, effective communication skills, and

appropriate timing and setting, and putting your knowledge into action. 1978. 78 pages, available through ERIC.

Joyce D. Shaffer and Jane E. Bell with
Midwest Regional Resource Center
Drake University
Des Moines, IA 50311

PARENTS OF THE HANDICAPPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HELPING PROFESSIONALS

This is a notebook that assists parents in gathering appropriate educational information about their child. The following sections are included:

Form 1: Identifying Information
Form 2: Birth History
Form 3: Developmental History
Form 4: Medical History
Form 5: Family Background
Form 6: Educational History
Form 7: Psychological Information
Form 8: Special Services Information
Form 9: Calendar of Professional Contacts

1977. $3.25.

National Learning Resource Center of
Pennsylvania
500 Valley Forge Plaza
1150 First Avenue
King of Prussia, PA 19406

PILOT PARENTS PROGRAM

A Design for Developing a Program for Parents of Handicapped Children

This manual is written for people interested in developing a Pilot Parent Program. The uniqueness of this program is that it provides a systematic approach for parents of handicapped children to utilize in forming a training program. Parents of handicapped children

assist parents of similarly handicapped chi
dren in meeting their child's unique needs.
1978. 99 pages. Free.

Fran Porter
Greater Omaha Association for Retarded
Citizens
3212 Dodge
Omaha, NE 68131

III.
ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDRE

Autism

National Society for Autistic Children
Ruth Dyer, Executive Director
169 Tampa Avenue
Albany, NY 12208

Birth Defects

National Foundation/March of Dimes
P.O. Box 2000
White Plains, NY 10602

Blind

American Council for the Blind
Durward K. McDaniel, National Representativ
1211 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

American Foundation for the Blind
Eugene Apple, Executive Director
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

Cerebral Palsy

United Cerebral Palsy Association
Earl H. Cunnerd, Executive Director
66 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016

Deaf

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf
George W. Fellendorf, Executive Director
3417 Volta Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

National Association of the Deaf
Frederick Schrieber, Executive Director
814 Thayer Avenue
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Deaf-Blind

National Association of the Deaf-Blind
Robert H. Petty, Executive Director
2703 Forest Oak Circle
Norman, OK 73071

Emotionally Disturbed

Mental Health Association, National Hdqtrs.
Bryan O'Connell, Executive Director
1800 North Kent Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Epilepsy

Epilepsy Foundation of America
Jack McAllister, Executive Director
1828 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Learning Disabilities

National Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
Jean Peterson, Executive Secretary
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Mental Retardation

National Association for Down's Syndrome
Joan Berman, Director of Services
P.O. Box 63
Oak Park, IL 60303

National Association for Retarded Citizens
Philip Roos, Executive Director
2709 Avenue E East
P.O. Box 6109
Arlington, TX 76011

National Down's Syndrome Congress
528 Ashland Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305

American Association for the Education of th
Severely and Profoundly Handicapped
P.O. Box 15287
Seattle, WA 98115

President's Committee on Mental Retardation
Washington, DC 20201

Physically Handicapped

National Easter Seal Society for
Crippled Children and Adults
Executive Director
2023 W. Ogden Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

National Paraplegia Foundation
Ann Ford, Associate Director
333 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601

Spina Bifida Association of America
Kent Smith, Executive Director
343 South Dearborn Street, Room 319
Chicago, IL 60604

Speech Impaired

American Speech and Hearing Association
Kenneth Johnson, Executive Secretary
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

General

American Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Children's Defense Fund
1763 R Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Closer Look: National Information Center for the Handicapped
Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20091

Parenting Materials Information Center
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street
Austin, TX 78701

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
Washington, DC 20210

IV.
MAGAZINES/JOURNALS

For all Disabilities:

CHILDREN TODAY. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Office of Human Development, Children's Bureau, Office of Child Development, Washington, DC 20201. (Frequently contains articles about children with handicaps.)

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN. Official Journal of the Council For Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091. 8 issues a year. $25.00 membership dues to CEC includes subscription to EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN plus subscription to TEACHING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, published 4 times a year, plus UPDATE, published occasionally. (For professional educators.)

THE EXCEPTIONAL PARENT. Psy-Ed Corporation, 262 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02116. 6 issues a year/$10.00. (Offers a Bookstore Service; parents can order books by mail at a discount).

SPECIAL CHILDREN. American Association of Special Educators, Box 168, Fryeburg, ME 04037. 3 issues a year/$10.00.

For Learning Disabilities:

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN - A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER. Love Publishing Co., 6635 East Villanova Place, Denver, CO 80222. 9 issues a year/$9.50.

For Mental Retardation:

MENTAL RETARDATION. American Association on Mental Deficiency, 5201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20015. 6 issues a year/$22.00.

SHARING OUR CARING. A Journal on Down's Syndrome. P.O. Box 400, Milton, WA 98354. 5 issues a year/$3.00

For Autism:

JOURNAL OF AUTISM AND CHILDHOOD SCHIZOPHRENIA. Plenum Publishing Corporation, 227 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011. 4 issues a year/Personal subscription discounted to $17.50 with certification that the subscription is paid for by subscriber for his

personal use. (Clearly for professionals, but may interest some parents as well.)

- Physical Handicaps:

THE PENNY DROPPER. Spina Bifida Association of the National Capitol Area, P.O. Box 4392, Arlington, VA 22204. 4 issues a year/ $2.00.

PERFORMANCE. President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Washington, DC 20210. 12 issues a year/Free.

REHABILITATION LITERATURE. The National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, 2023 West Ogden Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612. 12 issues a year/ $12.00.

- Visual Handicaps:

NEW OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND. American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011. 10 issues a year/ $6.00; two years/$11.00; three years/$16.00. (Clearly for professionals, but may interest some parents as well.)

- Hearing Impairments:

DEAF AMERICAN. National Association of the Deaf, 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Springs, MD 20910. 11 issues a year/$10.00 individual membership; $15.00/husband and wife; $25.00/family.

THE VOLTA REVIEW. Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, Ind., 3417 Volta Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20007. 9 issues a year/$15.00 with membership.